Completion of EW and NS Corridors

*46. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) by when the East-West and North-South corridors of the National Highways would be completed;

(b) the distance in kilometres that needs to be completed; and

(c) the problems being faced in its completion?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Four laning of the East-West and North-South (EW-NS) corridor is likely to be substantially completed by 2009 excepting for a few projects which may be completed by 2010.

(b) An aggregate length of 5,473 km remains to be completed, out of which work is already in progress in 4,652 km. The balance for award of contract is 821 km.

(c) The main problems being faced relate to land acquisition, shifting of religious structures and graveyards approval of designs of Road Over Bridges (ROBs), law and order, realignment of some stretches, slow progress by some contractors and delay in obtaining forest clearance for some stretches.

Extraction of dolomite from Bhutan

*47. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 467 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22nd November, 2007 and state:

(a) when was the Joint Technical Team constituted; and

(b) the action taken on the recommendation of the Joint Technical Team so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) A Joint Group of Experts (JGE) on Flood Management was constituted between India and Bhutan to discuss and assess the probable causes and effects of the recurring floods and erosion in the southern foothills of Bhutan and adjoining plains in India and to recommend appropriate and mutually acceptable remedial measures to both the Governments.

The first meeting of JGE was held in Bhutan from 1st to 5th November, 2004 and *inter-alia* a Joint Technical Team (JTT) was set up. JTT was entrusted with the tasks of assessment of the problems of flood and landslides and suggest remedial measures with respect to rivers flowing from Bhutan.

(b) The JTT has finalized and submitted its preliminary report during January 2006. In the report, JTT recommended taking up further studies on the subject. The second meeting of the JGE was scheduled for 26-27th February, 2008 at New Delhi.

Shift in flow of Ganga river

*48. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to wrost environmental conditions on the Gangotri glacier

in the Himalaya Mountain, the flow of river Ganga has gone far away from the main source 'Gaumukh';

(b) if so, whether any survey has been conducted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and

(d) The steps taken/being taken by the Government to bring back the flow of river Ganga to 'Gaumukh'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) The river Ganga originates from 'Gaumuk' which is the mouth of the Gangotri glacier. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has been carrying out studies on the recession of Gangotri glacier since 1935. As per data available with GSI, Gangotri glacier has receded by 18.80 metres (m)/year during 1935—96 period. The Gangotri glacier showed a higher rate of recession between 1956 and 1996. The highest rate of recession in the order of 38.00m/year was recorded during 1975-76. GSI has not carried out studies on recession of Gangotri glacier since 1996. Studies by other organizations after 1996 have revealed a rate of 12.10 m/year during 2004-05. As far as recession of the glaciers is concerned, it is a natural phenomenon and cannot be stopped using short term artificial measures.

Notification of rules under the Forest Act

*49. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rules under the Forest Act have been notified and the Act enforced;

(b) if so, when and the details thereof; and

(c) whether those tribals evicted from their homes in the absence of the law and the rules have been restored with their homestead?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 has come into force on 31st December, 2007. The rules for the implementation of this Act have also been notified on 1st January, 2008.

(c) The State/UT Governments have to implement the said Act for the recognition of rights of the tribals and other traditional forest dwellers. There is no case reported by the State/UT Governments regarding eviction of tribals since enactment of this Act. However, the Government of India has issued guidelines to the State/UT Governments *vide* its letter dated 21.12.2004 for discontinuance of eviction of tribals.

Proposals for inter-State roads from Rajasthan

†*50. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals of Rajasthan State with regard to inter-State roads are pending with the Central Government;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.